PEEPS INTO THE FAR NORTH

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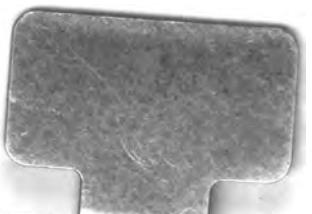

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PEEPS

INTO

THE FAR NORTH.

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LONDON:

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MIDNIGHT SUN AT THE NORTH CAPE.

See page **43.**

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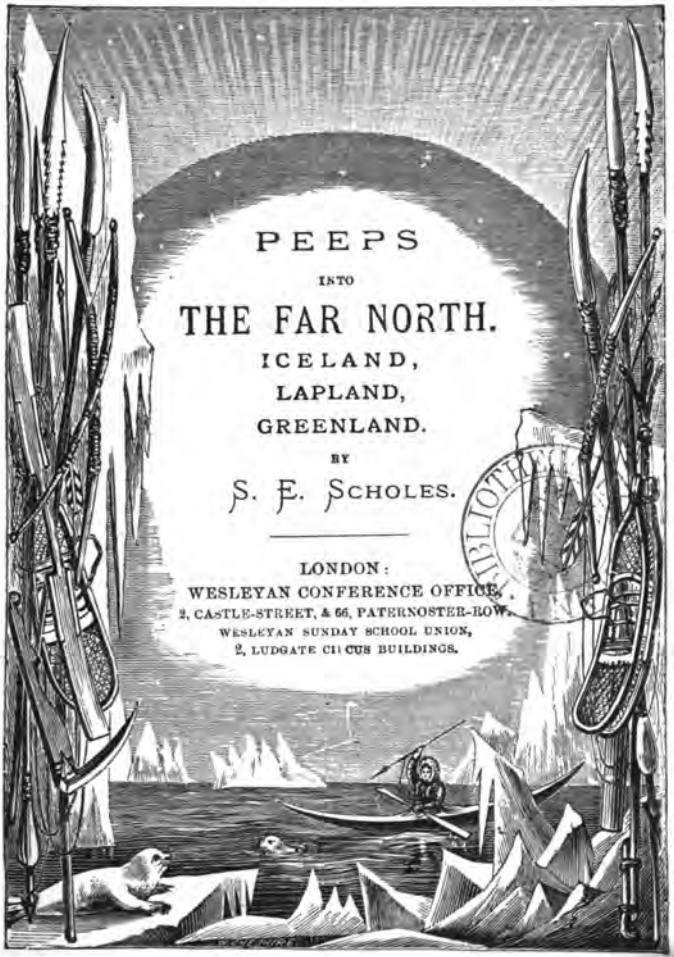

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Iceland.

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ICELAND.

CHAPTER I.

I DARESAY my young readers remember quite well that Iceland is an island in the extreme north-west of Europe; but I think I can tell them a few things about it which they have not heard, and though not very important now, there has been a time when it occupied no mean place when compared with the best countries of Europe.

First we will talk of the appearance of the Island. From some of the hills your eyes may explore the wild and barren country for forty miles in every direction, but you will think it a strange scene and quite different from anything you have gazed on before, or can well imagine. In all this extent you see perhaps one tree or bush, and two or three fields, while on every hand are wide spreading bogs or marshes; and lakes and rivers of *lava*, which has at different times burst

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from the burning mountain, Hecla, or some other volcanic spot, and overflowed the country, making it look very desolate and lifeless. Lava is thought to be a mixture of earths, salts, and metals, which, deep down in the earth become fused or melted, and so at an eruption, flow out in a liquid and boiling state, but afterwards becomes cold, solid, and hard. The lava is in some parts light grey, in others a darker colour, and often a jet black, very crisp and glassy. The last named looks very strange side by side with the pure white snow. It is wonderful how many different curious forms it has taken. In some places it looks almost like a little sea with waves or ripples, in others like sheets one upon another, or great rocks piled up in fearful fashion, and seeming just ready to fall and crush to atoms the smaller rocks below. Every now and then you come upon it in more beautiful forms, such as lofty pillars and columns, or ruins as it might be of a church, and at a distance small pillars grouped together appear like a little wood.

Of course *real* woods are not to be found in Iceland; a tiny tree, or, as we should call it, a *sapling*, no taller than you are, is considered quite a giant there; for what the Icelanders call trees are miserable little

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shrubs only two or three feet high. You would scarcely think of having a ramble to gather wild flowers, there are so very few, and these only in some parts. Occasionally you may see in the crevices or openings of high rocks some violets without scent, or some buttercups or ferns. There are a few tiny gardens in which parsley, potatoes, turnips, and spinach are made to grow, but they need great care and expense, and you may wander many miles without finding even grass; yet close by Hecla itself a few green meadows are to be seen opposite the hills covered with shining black lava. There are many of these hills surrounding Hecla, but it looks down upon them all, for it is full five thousand feet high, and it takes a man six hours to reach the summit, even though he ride more than half way up. But he is rewarded by the wonderful picture spread out below him,—of mountains of lava, fields of snow and ice, rivers and tiny lakes, numerous glaciers, giant rocks and terrible *ravines*, which you know, are the *openings* or deep valleys *between* the rocks.

Some suppose that around Hecla it is quite hollow underground, for footsteps there sound strangely and loudly. You may wander for miles without meeting

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one person; no song of birds delights your ear, and even in the middle of summer you rarely see a butterfly. You can imagine, therefore, how still and solemn it seems, how deserted and gloomy! Yet those who have learnt to love God because of His great love to them, and who feel sure that He is not only their Creator and Judge, but also their Almighty Friend, are able to feel contented and glad in Iceland, as well as in the loveliest spots of the wide world. Believe me, the dullest dreariest life on earth becomes truest brightness, if lived under the approving smile of our Saviour; while without His smile the most joyous and bewitching life is in reality gloomy and wretched, and goes out in utter darkness.

The most wonderful thing connected with Iceland is the number of geysers, or springs of boiling water, it has, especially in the south-west. The Icelandic word for a boiling spring is "geysa," which means "to burst forth with rage." Travellers may often know that they are approaching the geysers by the clouds of steam they see at some distance. The principal one, called the Great Geyser, is a pond fifty feet across and eleven feet deep, in shape much like a saucer, and having *around* it many beautiful incrus-

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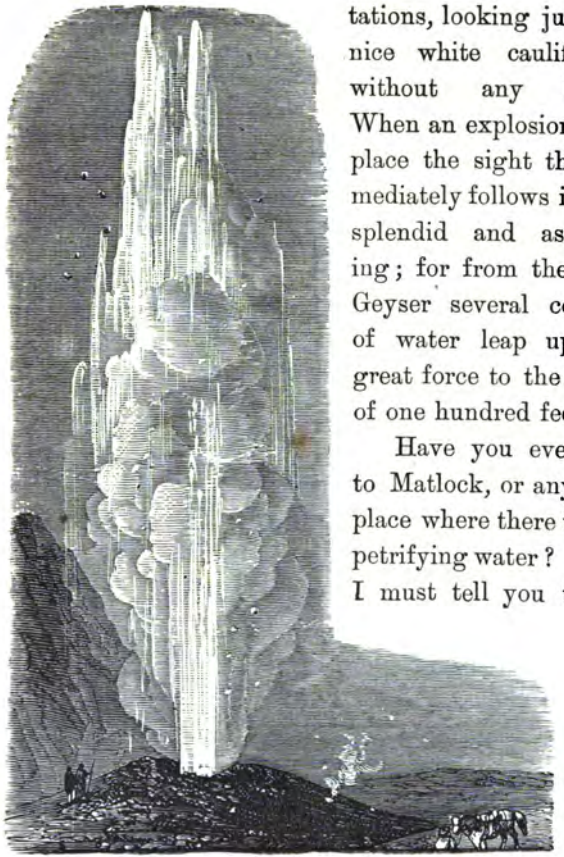

tations, looking just like nice white cauliflowers without any leaves. When an explosion takes place the sight that immediately follows is truly splendid and astonishing; for from the Great Geyser several columns of water leap up with great force to the height of one hundred feet.

Have you ever been to Matlock, or any other place where there is some petrifying water? If not, I must tell you that to

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petrify means "to turn into stone;" and the water of the geysers is petrifying. If you placed in it an apple, orange, cake, or anything else you liked, and went in a few months to see, you would find it had become stone.

When the columns of water cease rising from the geysers, a quantity of steam and spray bursts forth with a tremendous roar, rising nearly as high as the water had done. It is rather dangerous going to see these wonderful springs, I can tell you, for it is impossible to know just when or how the water will spring forth; so that sometimes curious visitors get scalded, which is more than they bargained for. The water becomes a little cooler by being thrown into the air, but it is generally hot enough to cook eggs. There are usually five or six eruptions of the Great Geyser within the twenty-four hours; but some of the other tiny springs seem always wanting to be seen and noticed, and dart into the air every quarter of an hour or so, but only rise a few feet. From some of the springs may be heard a low rumbling, and from some of these a long column of vapour leaps up instead of water.

There is a wonderful reddish rock about twenty

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feet high and fifteen long, from the sides of which flow no fewer than sixteen springs, and the bed into which they fall is covered with red pebbles.

I forgot to tell you how beautiful the principal geysers look when the sun is shining upon them, causing the gay prismatic colours, or, in other words, making brilliant little rainbows appear in the clear water as it rises and falls. But there is one other very different kind of geyser, that, instead of clear water, sends up thick black mud, which is caught in a very large reservoir of more than 100 feet in *diameter*.

In the south-west of Iceland, still nearer the sea than the springs, are the sulphur mountains, from which a great deal of sulphur is sent to the various countries of Europe. This is a very dreary part, for there is so much hot water under the clay that a vapour is, in many places, always rising from the ground, and of course vegetation will not grow there at all.

You might like to see the wonders of Iceland, but I fancy you would not much enjoy travelling there,—for several reasons. The roads are so narrow, and often so rough also, as to be quite unfit for a carriage

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of any kind, and I have heard that there is not one in the island. The hot springs make the ground near them very soft and dangerous, so that you sink in it to your knees sometimes, and have incessant fear as you walk along that your next step may cause you to sink into the boiling water itself. If you decide to leave the dangers of the springs, you are troubled by the snow, which, hiding hollow places underneath it, deceives you sadly. Then if you leave the snow and try to climb the hills and rocks, you are almost certain to hurt your hands on the sharp points and angles of the lava.

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CHAPTER II.

HAVING said so much about the country, it is now time I told you something of the people. They are the descendants of Norwegians. In the year 874 some of the people of Norway, who much disliked their king, Harold the Fair-haired, left Norway, and with their leader, Ingulf, settled in Iceland, which they presently divided into four provinces, each being governed by a sheriff or judge. The form of government was then and for more than three hundred years, a republic, and during a great part of that time Iceland was a centre of learning for Europe, and possessed the wisest and bravest men of the period. The General Assembly or Parliament was called the Althing. It met once a year in the open air at Thingvalla. Poetry, music, and history were all much cultivated in Iceland eight hundred years ago, and when the poets and other clever men visited any of the European courts, they were made much of, and loaded with gifts and honours.

In 981 Christianity was introduced into the island

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by Frederic, a Saxon Bishop, and in 1380 Iceland was united to the kingdom of Denmark, and still remains so. It has had sad troubles at various times, which caused the population to decrease very much. For instance, in 1402 the plague broke out and destroyed two-thirds of the population. During the fifteenth and up to the early part of the seventeenth century the poor Icelanders were troubled by invasions from the English, French, and other nations; and in 1627 a number of pirates from Algiers in the North of Africa arrived, and after murdering nearly fifty persons, carried off four hundred prisoners. During the last century 16,000 perished through small-pox, and 10,000 by famine.

In 1793 there was the most fearful volcanic eruption that has been known in the island. Terrible streams of lava swept over the country, destroying all fertility; volcanic ashes flew in every direction, and for more than a whole year a thick smoke filled the air, making the day seem little better than the night, it was so dark. But misfortunes were not yet ended; another famine and a very bad kind of small-pox caused the deaths of 11,000 more unhappy Icelanders.

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On Easter Monday, 1875, the southern crater of the volcanic mountain Dyngjupgoll burst into an eruption of appalling violence. The cloud of ashes that issued from it, and that spread over the country a crust of considerable depth, was so dense as at one time to produce utter darkness. The result of the cloud changed two of the most fertile valleys in Iceland, and six adjacent communes, covering in all an area of three thousand square miles, into a desert. Efforts were made to clear the grass on particular farms, but about as rapidly as men cleared, the wind brought back the pumice and ashes. A kind of famine ensued, and public subscriptions were raised in Europe to relieve the wants of the people.

The entire population is now only about 64,000 though Iceland is 270 miles broad and 160 long. Reikjavick, the capital, has only 500 inhabitants; so we should consider *it* a mere village. Some of the villages contain only five or six cottages.

The *climate* is said to be much more severe now than it was a few hundred years ago, and it seems as though the people had changed also, becoming less industrious and energetic. In consequence of these

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two facts the soil is less productive than formerly, growing no corn now, and the so-called trees and bushes are much smaller than they were. The people are of moderate height and strength, with light hair, sometimes red; and blue eyes. The men are very plain, but the women are sometimes rather good-looking. Many die in infancy, and some say it is because they are fed on such unwholesome kinds of food. There are not many very old people, which is probably owing to the sharp coldness of the air, and the want of nourishing food.

As to the character of the good folks in Iceland, I am sorry to say they are spiritless, niggardly, and very lazy, liking hunger better than work, and having several bad habits; such as drinking too much brandy, taking a great deal of snuff, and being intolerably dirty,—so dirty that you and I would not like to sit close by them or to stay long in their filthy and disagreeable huts. Yet they are not without good points. They, are in some respects, very conscientious, and are exceedingly trustworthy; you may leave clothes, money, jewels, etc., lying about, yet they will not steal them, or take the smallest thing belonging to you, so that locks and keys for doors

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and boxes are needless in Iceland. And as for murders and other dreadful crimes, they so seldom occur that the gaol has been turned into a house for the governor, and there are but two or three policemen in the island. They are not, however, *perfectly* honest, for sometimes cattle are stolen. The poorest people can read and write, having been taught when children by their fathers during the long winters, and if they had the advantages now found in England, would probably be very wise and clever, for they have the *capability* of learning, and are very intelligent.

The men wear jackets, vests, etc., of dark cloth, and a fur cap or felt hat; they have a kind of shoe made of calf, sheep, or seal-skin, and fastened to the foot by a strap. The women and even the children of the rich wear the same kind of shoes; the former wear coarse black woollen skirts, coloured aprons and tight jackets, and on their heads a man's cap of black woollen stuff, with a long point, having a tassel at the end, which falls on their shoulder. This head-dress is simple, but suits them with their light hair well.

The poor in Iceland have to live chiefly on sour milk and dried fish; often on the *heads* of fish only,

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when they sell the other part. They are fond of train-oil, and mix it with their butter, or eat it alone. Sometimes they have a queer, unraised, kind of bread made of powdered Iceland moss. The richer folks subsist principally on fish, such as cod and haddock, or in summer time on salmon, with the addition of potatoes. Sometimes they have snipes, which are very fine there, or lamb which is often smoked and kept some time, or the eggs of the eider duck, which are not quite so good as those of the hen. They have also butter and cheese. The ordinary beverages are beer, brandy, and coffee.

If you stood just outside one of their little churches some fine Sunday morning you would be rather amused, I expect; for, surrounding the sacred building, would be a congregation of horses, each quietly waiting till the end of the service to be claimed by the members of the human congregation, for there are no inns to leave these steeds at. Presently out come the good people, in number forty, fifty, sometimes as many as ninety; then each one kisses the pastor, who returns the embrace, after which they kiss each other. Plenty of chatting follows, and a little drinking of brandy, provided before leaving

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home. At last they say good-bye, and, mounted on their faithful little steeds, disperse to their quiet and distant homes.

The north part of the island has the best soil, and there the chief employment is cattle-rearing;—some farmers have three or four hundred sheep with only a dozen cows, the same number of horses. As the winter advances, the sheep begin to have a very heavy coat of wool, which they much need in that severe climate; but on the approach of summer their clothing falls off of itself. Even the horses have in winter decidedly woolly coats and large tails and manes. I tell you this because it is one fact more showing us how God cares for every creature that His hands have made. All the animals, but particularly the cows and horses, are smaller than they are in more southern lands.

In other parts of Iceland, especially near the coast, the men are employed in fishing;—some go off in boats for the cod and haddock, and, I am sorry to say, are often lost at sea. For fear that all in a boat should be drowned, they take care not to have a whole family in the same boat, but only one member; thinking it better to lose one than all. I think if I were a fisher-

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man in Iceland, I had rather catch salmon than cod or haddock, because it is more amusing and less dangerous work. At the right time the men make a wall about a yard high, of stones placed lightly together across the stream, to prevent the salmon getting back to the sea. A net is put before this wall, and several other low barriers are built at short distances, so that if the fish get over one they may be stopped by another and not escape. The water is then drawn off as much as possible, and this so much annoys and troubles the unfortunate fish, that they dart hither and thither in a state of great excitement. The fishermen now catch them with their hands, grasping them by the head and tail, and fling them quickly on to the shore, where other men are waiting to seize and pass them on. They all have to wear woollen mittens or else these lively creatures would slip away from them. Sometimes as many as a thousand fine salmon are caught at one time, and one half of this "take" belongs to the fishermen as payment for their services.

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CHAPTER III.

THE prettiest place in Iceland is Thingvalla, bounded on one side by the sea, and on another by fine mountains; while a river, falling over some rather high rocks, increases the beauty of the spot. But the Icelanders like Thingvalla best because it has some good meadows on which their cattle can feed. Often these poor animals have to scrape away the snow and hunt most perseveringly before they can find their scanty bit of grass.

There are no inns where travellers can rest or refresh themselves in Iceland; so they have either to lodge in the miserable huts, or in a general store-room in the village, or in a church! But I must tell you the kind of buildings to be found in this part. The churches are nearly all *very* small—no larger than a moderate-sized sitting or dining-room, and the people not only allow visitors to sleep in them, but keep clothes and provisions of all kinds in them. How

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strange it would seem in England to have our churches used thus! The grave-yards have a peculiar appearance, for over each grave is placed an empty coffin to protect the tombstone from the weather; so if you were not informed *why* these coffins were there you would suppose the dead were in them above ground instead of being, as they really are, deep down in the earth.

The cottages, or, as you would call them, miserable huts, are very small, with a door so low that most people have to stoop on entering, and there are no upstairs rooms, but merely two tiny ones on the ground floor with a dark narrow passage between, built very low—in order to make the hut warmer. At the far end of the passage is the fire-place. The huts are not built of stone, bricks, or wood, but of blocks of lava, and all the *crannies* or spaces between these are filled up with earth. The walls and roofs are covered with grass, so that, were it not for the wooden chimneys, you would suppose these dwellings to be really grassy mounds or hillocks. *Inside*, the walls and floor are of mud, and in the former, poles are fixed, to which are hung clothes, boots, stockings, etc., and in most huts there is a little shelf on which are a few

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TRAVELLING IN THE SNOW.

HOSPITALITY IN ICELAND.

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books. There are also poles in the fire-places on which to dry the fish and wet clothing. The furniture consists of a small table, but no chairs, with the bedsteads and a few chests, on which the people sit. One of the two wee rooms is used as kitchen, bed-room, and sitting-room, all in one; the other is the pantry, and, strange to say, the stable also during the long winter months, where all the cattle are sheltered.

The houses of the clergymen are not much better, and are also covered with grass. The most comfortable dwellings are those occupied by a few rich people at Reikjavick and on the coast; but even these are built of wood, and have only four or five rooms, all on the ground floor. The windows are all in the front. At the entrance there is a low flight of steps. The merchants or others who own these houses manage to make them very comfortable, furnishing them with mahogany chairs, tables, mirrors, and iron stoves from Copenhagen. The walls are only whitewashed, but they are adorned with engravings, and the floors, though not carpeted completely, have warm handsome rugs in front of the sofas; and the bright silver and china arranged on the side-tables give the rooms a cheery

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and home-like look. They have no coal in Iceland, but burn wood which has to be taken all the way from Denmark. The poorer folks, however, cannot afford such expensive fuel; so they burn fish-bones, fat, and turf, and as you may readily imagine, the smell from these when burning is not very delightful.

Eider ducks are found in Iceland. Have you ever heard how tame these birds are? They will, when sitting, allow anyone to touch them, without stirring an inch from the spot; or if they do sometimes move, it is to a very short distance. But when their young are hatched they do not take things so quietly, but flap their wings with anger, and snap with their bills at any intruder who dares to go too near their precious ducklings. Each mother lays about eleven eggs, and generally chooses for them the most dangerous places up among the rocks. By means of ropes, however, the peasants venture to climb for the sake of the soft and valuable eider-down. The duck lines her nest with the finest down, but, to her dismay, she soon finds it has been stolen; again she plucks it off her breast and re-lines it; but, alas! this shares the same fate, and it is not until the nest has been lined a third time with

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coarser down that it is left in peace. I cannot help feeling rather sorry for these poor birds and hope you will think kindly of them next time you nestle warmly and cosily under a soft eider-down quilt.

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Lapland.

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SCENE IN LAPLAND.—VALLIS PEAK.

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LAPLAND.

CHAPTER I.

NO doubt my young readers know that Lapland is in the north of Europe, yet I should like them to look at a map, and notice its exact situation, east of Sweden, and close upon the Arctic Ocean. A great portion of Lapland consists of a chain of rugged mountains, many of them 6,000 feet high. North of this range are densely-wooded hills, while the air, strange to say, is much milder than round the head of the Gulf of Bothnia or the interior, where the cold is extremely severe, and in summer the heat is just as intense. Yet there are many extensive tracts of level country, through which flow the Tornea, and other long rivers. The largest place in Lapland, which indeed we may almost call its capital, is Kantokimo, yet even it contains only a few families, and does not *look* much like a capital.

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Travellers in Lapland are very glad to clothe themselves in a warm garment made of reindeer-skin, which fits closely round the neck and wrists, where it is often trimmed with ermine or other fur, and reaches half-way below the knee. A very long thick woollen sash is then put round the neck and waist, which adds greatly to the warmth and convenience of this curious dress, and boas made of squirrel-fur are also wound round and round the neck, which come up to the nose. Sea-otter caps, with laps to cover the ears and forehead, protect the head, and dog-skin mittens and gauntlets of rein-deer skin the hands.

And now you would suppose no one could feel the cold much in clothing like this; but indeed they do, for in so severe a climate, where the cold is often forty degrees below zero, it is scarcely possible to dress warmly enough, and before the traveller has been journeying long, he tries to bury his poor nose in his squirrel boa, and to keep moving his feet briskly to keep them from freezing.

You ask what the traveller sees in his wanderings. Low-wooded hills, and plains white with snow; and everywhere the two things of which he feels most conscious are the snow and the silence. The great

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beauty of these northern regions consists in the clear starry sky, and the splendid lights which illuminate the wild scenery. I can give you no idea of the delicate pink, or the clear sapphire colour in which the hills are bathed. Could you see for yourself, you would think Lapland must be some delightful fairy-land, and that it mattered little about the country being comparatively barren, with such a brilliant roof above and such glorious lights upon everything. Sometimes along the windings of a river may be seen high banks fringed with fir trees loaded with snow, which sparkle as though covered with thousands of diamonds, beneath a rosy sky. Then travelling in another direction, weary hours or days may be spent in a wilderness of lakes and marshes, with stunted birch thickets here and there.

We in England are very ready to exclaim about the severity of the weather if the barometer is thirty degrees above zero, and icicles hang from the roofs of our houses; but an Englishman travelling in Lapland during the winter, would soon find icicles hanging from his beard; that his eyelids felt heavy with ice; his nose badly swollen with the frost, and variegated with patches of different colours. Besides which the

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unfortunate man would feel the sharp cutting snow, driving fiercely in his face, anything but pleasant, and sometimes in order to escape being frozen to death, he would be compelled to move his hands and feet as quickly as possible. Even in the churches the people's breath freezes so that it forms thick clouds, concealing them from the pastor and him from them; and they cannot have the churches warmed because the smell arising from the disagreeable clothing in the heat would be unbearable. So accustomed are the people to keep moving their hands and feet in their reindeer pulks in order to keep off stupor and death, that even when intoxicated they still keep up the habit.

The Laplanders certainly do all they can to keep off the cold, for they wear a shirt and trousers of sheep skin with the fur next their bodies, and over this a coat of reindeer skin. Then you could never guess what they do to keep their feet warm, so I must tell you. They wear broad boat-shaped shoes, stuffed as much as possible with hay, which is said to be a capital plan, though of course it costs money; for fresh hay has to be put in every now and then, and it is neither plentiful nor cheap in Lapland. These shoes are bound tightly on the foot by strings which go

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round and round the ankle; and though at first people feel very much as if they were walking about in two large feather pillows, they soon get used to them, and think them a capital invention, as they keep the feet tolerably warm. If they want to walk in the snow they then fasten on to their feet a pair of flat shoes, four or sometimes six feet long, made from a thin fir deal. These prevent the wearer from sinking in the snow. They are a little turned up at the ends, and have a fastening in the middle for the foot.

I heard a gentleman say they were exceedingly awkward to walk in, and so people who are not accustomed to them flounder and plunge in most curious fashion: one moment they may be seen standing erect and enterprising; and the next, their head with their arms and most of the body has disappeared in the snow, the chief thing visible being the long shoes. The gentleman wished his wife as well as himself to become accustomed to these shoes; but they were too wise to experiment both together; so one stood by without shoes in order to help the other up as soon as he or she had fallen; for it is most difficult to get up again when once down.

The Lapp children have a very funny appearance,

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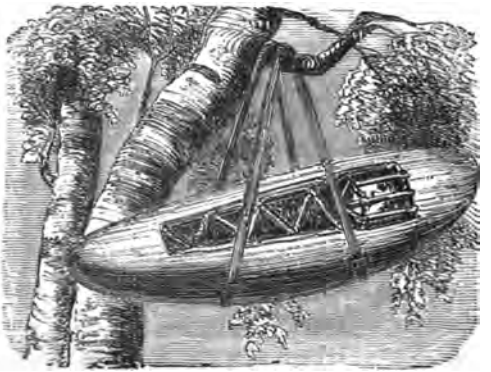
for their clothing is so thick and rough that they look as wide as they are long. They are coated with reindeer-skin from head to foot, and all you can see of them is half a round, brownish-red face. These youngsters almost remind one of small bears standing on their hind legs; still this dress has a great advantage, for besides keeping them warmer than anything else, it prevents them getting wet with a fall in the snow. The babies sleep in little cradles which are hung up to a branch of a tree or other suitable place, as shown in the picture.



A LAPP CRADLE.

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A LAPLANDER IN SUMMER COSTUME.

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CHAPTER II.

THE trees seem to have no voices in the far North Let the wind blow as it will, *they* stand still and motionless, with all their life and sympathy frozen up, as it were; and all you hear is the sharp whistle of the dry and driving snow. I have read of a Lapp girl being out in fierce weather of this kind, the sharp wind cutting her face all the time, for twenty-four hours, herself and her companions having lost the way; yet she seemed no worse for it, but on reaching home, immediately set about cooking a supper for her friends. What English girl could endure such weather for so long a time?

The severity of the climate is shown in the fact that potatoes, which have to be brought a hundred or a hundred and fifty miles, reach their destination frozen as hard as stones; sugar and salt also become stony masses, and even wine itself freezes. Of course there are few people rich enough to taste that beverage in Lapland. All articles of food which are frozen are kept in that state until required, and

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when cooked, taste almost as good as though they had not been frozen. The winter is not only severe but long, lasting from the end of August to the end of May; and during all that time the sun almost deserts this lonely country;—indeed, for six weeks in the middle of winter it keeps entirely out of sight. The light arising from it spread over the far horizon, shows that the sun itself must be somewhere below. During winter, the moon and stars are always visible, and appear strange yet beautiful, shining clear through the pale rosy blush of softened daylight.

Spring, summer and autumn often pass away in six or eight weeks, but while it is visible the sun courts the Laplanders in good earnest, never leaving them, and in June shining in the middle of the night as brightly as in the day, thus doing his best to atone for his long absence. *(See Frontispiece.)* No wonder then, that corn is ready to cut six or seven weeks a ter it is sown, or that mosquitoes make their appearance through the unceasing heat of this northern summer. Thus, you see, these troublesome little enemies are found north and south of us, but not in favoured England, which enjoys a temperate climate.

During the warm weather the people put away their

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reindeer clothing and dress in a kind of coarse blue cloth or serge, bound with yellow or scarlet round the neck, edge, etc. Men and women dress almost exactly alike and no one thinks of wearing any linen or underclothing. In the summer, especially the early part, the ground is very marshy and unpleasant for travelling, and all who have long walks before them are glad to exchange their snow-shoes for others made of soft seal-skin which yield to the pressure of the foot; for often the only road is formed by the trunks of trees laid in a long row, from which the poor traveller frequently falls into the treacherous marsh.

The Aurora Borealis or northern lights may generally be seen during the Lapland winter in all their splendour. Ah! I wish I could tell you how beautiful is the sight; how the pure robe of snow in which the country lies wrapt, is lit up with many colours, now with palest, purest moonlight, then bright golden, or crimson. All the travelling in Lapland is by means of reindeer sledges. The sledge is much like a pointed shoe in shape, four feet long, little more than a foot wide, and so covered over in the front part that the traveller has only just room to get in. He is then

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fastened in, and finds his legs fit quite tightly enough into this tiny conveyance. The reins are simple enough, being merely a rope, the one end of which is

fastened round the traveller's wrist and the other round one of the horns of the reindeer. The only harness is a thong of reindeer-hide fastened to the

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point of the sledge, going under the animal's body and then round his neck.

As you will conclude, only one person can travel in a sledge at once, and if there is luggage that has to be put by itself in another. Travellers generally set off two or three or more together: but whether they all arrive at home at once is a doubtful matter, depending very much upon the fancy of the animals; for sometimes the first will race off suddenly, almost flying, another will turn off a little to the right, and a third to the left, and the last will probably amuse himself by turning round and round a few times, and then upsetting his unfortunate driver on the snow; the poor man must right himself as well as he can, and sigh in vain for the company of his fellow-travellers who have gone on far before. The most obedient and tractable reindeer will occasionally fly from the track, plunge into the thickest snow, or stare you in the face and resolutely refuse to stir an inch. They cannot run so quickly as the horse, but have greater powers of endurance, and I have read of one on some occasions going one hundred miles in a-day.

The reindeer is just the right animal for walking on the snow, for its hoof is much cloven or divided

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and very flexible, so that every time the creature puts it to the ground, it spreads out wide and flat, and prevents the animal from slipping as it would with a hoof smaller, harder, or less flexible. In many parts of the country the ground is very uneven, having risings or hillocks here and there, and over these the traveller goes bumping and tumbling in his sledge in no very pleasant fashion. He generally tries to balance himself carefully according to the ground, but sometimes the protuberances are quite concealed by the snow, so that the poor man is thrown off his guard, or the naughty animal takes it into its head to bolt, quite heedless of his master's weary bones. Still the Laplanders would be badly off indeed were it not for their reindeer; for they are almost the only property they have and serve for so many purposes. A person is therefore considered rich or poor according to the number of these animals he happens to possess. If he have only one hundred, he is poor, and will probably have to go to the coast some day to try and earn something by fishing. If he have three hundred reindeer he will manage tolerably, and if a thousand or fifteen hundred, he is thought quite a rich man.

The doe, or female deer, is kept for the sake of its

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milk, which is exceedingly rich and nourishing, though not quite so nice as that of the cow; but each animal gives a very small quantity, about a cupfull, so it is necessary to keep a large number of these creatures. A strong kind of cheese is made from this milk, and it also yields an oil which is considered by the Laplanders as the best remedy for frozen flesh. The hide of the reindeer serves the people for clothing, blankets and carpets; the flesh is their principal food; the sinews are split and used by the women to sew with; or serve the men for bow-strings; the horns for glue and the bones for spoons. They are very useful creatures in another respect,—they take care of themselves in a country where it seems to us as though there could not possibly be enough food for them. God, however, has not forgotten the reindeer, but has provided for them a liberal supply of reindeer moss, as it is called. This often grows a foot high and though generally covered by snow, the animals have instinct to know it is beneath, and so they scrape away the snow with their feet or their horns, until they find it. In summer they vary their food by eating leaves and dwarf shrubs.

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CHAPTER III.

YOU will be wondering what kind of homes are to be found in Lapland. Ah! you would not like to change your home for one in that country; although of course some are rather better than others. Most of the houses are formed of upright slender poles, fastened together at the top, leaving, however, an opening for the smoke to escape. These slight poles spread out towards the bottom, but leave only a space of twelve or fifteen feet for the whole family. Very little room, is it not? Four or five yards altogether! The roof is too low to allow of anyone standing upright except in the centre of the house or tent. The hut is covered outside with a very coarse thick, baize, and a double fold falls over the doorless entrance. There is neither chair nor table in the place, but the floor is well covered with deer skins, on which the people lounge continually. In the middle of the hut is a stone circle within which burns the wood fire, and over it hangs a large pot suspended by a chain from

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the roof. As there is no chimney, there is always a terrible smoke from the wood fire, especially when first lighted, so that it becomes quite stifling, and I do not wonder that this, in addition to the glaring white of the endless snow, makes the people suffer much from disease of the eye. The only advantages of this smoke are—that in winter the warmth is increased by it, and in summer it drives away some of the numerous mosquitoes.

The only utensils for food found in these huts are a wooden ladle, a basin with a handle, and a horn spoon for each member of the family. The low, dark huts in a desert of snow have a very peculiar appearance. Many of the Laplanders live not upon, but actually in the earth; in a large burrow as it were. These scooped-out huts are sometimes almost covered with snow, and appear merely risings in the ground, except that the smoke issuing from the latter make one think *perhaps* human beings may really be existing below.

Through Kantokimo, in Lapland, flows a river, on either side of which, may be seen a row of small storehouses perched upon rather high posts, each having a smooth horizontal board outside to prevent the rats and

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mice from effecting an entrance;—for I must tell you that during the summer the inhabitants nearly all leave their homes and go to the sea-side, in order to fish, etc., and of course it would not do to give up their little property and household stores to the ravages of such small but mischievous enemies as rats and mice.

At Kantokimo, the belfry is quite separate from the church, and surrounded by trees, as is often the case in Sweden. Winter is decidedly the best time for studying the character of the Laplanders, when they may generally be found at home. They are shy, suspicious, and superstitious, thinking much of charms and omens. They have a curious kind of drum which they use for divining purposes, and although many of the people have become Christians, there are still some to be found who prize this drum more than anything. I am afraid I cannot describe it to you very exactly, but there are nearly a hundred cords attached to it, some at one end and some at the other. It is inscribed with numerous red signs or figures, and on the top of it is placed a kind of pointer made of reindeer's horn. The plan is to strike the drum with a short stick, and the inquirer is supposed to have good or evil fortune, according to the spot where the pointer rests.

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The word Lapoina, or Lapland, really means witchcraft, but the natives do not at all like it; they consider it a reproach, and never use it themselves, but call the country Sameadna, and the people Same.

I am glad to tell you that one or two pious Swedes have lived for some time in Lapland, and done much good there, so that many of the Laplanders have put away their superstitious nonsense of divining-drums and become Christians, and ask counsel of God only, trying to serve Him in sincerity and truth. The people are, generally speaking, very honest, resembling the Icelanders in this respect. Locks and bolts are never used or thought of. The Laplander leads what we should consider a very dull, monotonous life, in winter especially. He goes to bed at nine, rises at eight, and eats, smokes, gossips, and sleeps until bed-time again. In the middle of the day there are about four hours of dim sunlight, which is quite long enough for doing any small duties that are necessary. A climate too cold to be pleasant seems to have the same effect as one that is excessively warm; it makes the people listless and indolent. Besides, you see, there cannot be very much work in a country like Lapland, for before the brief summer quite closes, each family

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takes care to cut a large quantity of wood for winter use; to gather in the hay; bring the cattle home; stow away a quantity of barley, bran, and fir-bark for bread, and salt plenty of fish for winter use. So with few wants, and a frozen-up country, the chief thing to be done seems to be to keep warm. They have fine opportunities for reading and improving their minds; but have not had much desire for this. Now they are becoming Christianized they will better appreciate such advantages. There is not much encouragement in Lapland for the people to sow flax or barley, for often, even at midsummer, a blighting frost may come and destroy all that has been sown.

It is very odd what different customs are to be found in different countries. You will be rather astonished to hear that in Lapland no one ever thinks of giving a friend a kiss, however dear that friend may be; the very idea of such a thing is quite shocking there, and the salutation liked is to put the right arm round a friend's waist. The Laplanders never dance, and even their singing is melancholy. They worship stones, presenting to them offerings of deer's horns; but, I am glad to say, several Christian schools have been in existence for some years, and several thousands

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of children have had the benefit of attending them; so we may hope they are growing up Christian men and women, to prove bright lights in this dark corner of the world.

I once heard that a gentleman visiting Lapland wished to take the likeness of one or two of the people. Accordingly, an old man was requested to sit for his portrait; but he was much alarmed, and at once said to the messenger, "I know what travellers are, and what a habit they have of getting people's skulls to carry home with them. Who knows but I shall be killed for the sake of my skull?" At last, after much encouragement and many promises from the good man sent to fetch him, he said with much earnestness "Yes, I have made up my mind to go, even if a shower of knives should fall from Heaven." This old man was seventy-three, but did not look more than sixty; had thick black hair, almost a crimson colour in his face, large dark-set eyes under bushy eyebrows, and an expression both sad and grim. He remained perfectly still while his likeness was being taken, and when rewarded with a piece of money and a cup of coffee was quite satisfied. He went home proud and happy, declaring "the foreigners did not look at all dangerous

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persons;" adding, "perhaps they do not collect skulls after all." An old woman's likeness was taken soon after, and when the artist went nearer to examine her features she cried out "Look at me, O son of man." When her portrait was finished, some money was given her, which much delighted her, and made her exclaim, "What! am I to get my coffee and tobacco, and to be paid too? Thanks, O son of man, for your great goodness."

The grandest and most solemn event in a Laplander's life is the chase of the black bear, and you may know exactly how many of these animals a man has killed, by the number of tufts of bears' hair he wears in his bonnet. While attacking the creature, the Laplanders join in a particular chorus, begging the bear not to hurt them. Having at length killed it, the man takes it home on a sledge, and the reindeer that has drawn it is actually so indulged as to be allowed a holiday all the rest of that year. Indeed, the people honour the bear so much that they build a new hut in which to cook its flesh, and then, joined by their wives and family, sing songs of joy and gratitude to the animal for allowing them to return home in safety. But the funniest thing is, they always speak so very

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respectfully of him, not calling him the bear, but "the old man in the fur cloak." Now, dear children, we must say adieu to our friends in Lapland for the present at any rate. The following verse gives a good idea of the sudden way in which summer bursts upon Lapland.

"Oh! 'tis the touch of fairy hand
That wakes the spring of northern land;
It warms not there, by slow degrees,
With changeful pulse the uncertain breeze,
But sudden on the wondering sight
Bursts forth the beams of living light;
And instant verdure springs around,
And magic flowers bedeck the ground."

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Greenland.

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ICEBERGS.

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GREENLAND.

CHAPTER I.

IF my young friends turn to a map of North America and look in the extreme north-west, they will notice that though Greenland is rather a large country, very few places are marked upon it. The fact is, we know comparatively little of it or its inhabitants. Yet it ought to be a deeply-interesting country to every English boy and girl, because many precious English lives have been lost on its shores.

About thirty years ago the brave Sir John Franklin was willing to command a vessel manned by one hundred and thirty brave sailors, and explore the dangerous coasts of this island in the hope of finding a north-west passage to Asia. He and each of the brave sailors dropt down upon the ice or in the vessels, and *died* from starvation; at any rate, none of them have been found alive. Years went by, and still no

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tidings reached England of these brave explorers. Can you imagine the grief and dismay felt by the friends and relatives of these unfortunate men, when they looked in vain for their return and no positive news of them came from any source? At last at the end of eleven years Lady Franklin, who longed to have any papers or records that her dear husband had left concerning the expedition, and to know if possible how he and the rest had died, sent out a little vessel called the "Fox" commanded by Captain M'Clintock, who nobly exerted himself to the utmost, and, I am glad to say, he and his brave sailors returned in safety after an absence of two years and three months, bringing a few of the much-wished for records, and alas! tidings of the deaths of all Sir John Franklin's party.

Greenland is supposed to be a number of islands joined together by ice. It belongs to Denmark, and is only two hundred miles from the nearest point of Iceland. It was discovered by an Icelander so long ago as A.D. 981. This man gave a flattering account of the country, and thus persuaded many of his unfortunate countrymen to go and settle there. Then it seems to have been forgotten until it was again discovered in 1587 by Davis.

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THE EREBUS AND TERROR IN THE ICE.

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It ought to be called Whiteland, for it is almost all the year round covered with ice and snow, which melt away only in midsummer, when a few simple flowers, such as buttercups and dandelions, and a white kind of moss, appear in favoured spots during one month. During this month, when the heat is greater than with us, mosquitoes appear just as they do also in Lapland.

In the interior are a number of lofty mountains which are covered with perpetual snow. Icebergs are carried down the valleys, and, falling over the cliffs, are borne away by the currents. The masses of ice are much larger than you would suppose, being often like very large fields in extent. These are called "floes," and men and bears may be seen upon them. Sometimes these floes remain in one place for a long time, as the sea is very calm near Greenland; but they may drift away for miles. As you may imagine, vessels are occasionally in serious danger from them; and if two floes should happen to come up against the ship from opposite directions, it must be a strong one indeed to withstand the shock. Besides, huge piles or rocks of ice may frequently be seen on the rough, broken coast, and these, which are called "packs,"

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consist of accumulated ice, *i.e.*, old as well as new.

I wish I could tell you how imposing is the appearance of these grand ice-cliffs, and how they glitter in the clear arctic moonlight, or the soft northern lights. You would in truth think Greenland an enchanted spot then, especially if you could see it and yet be free from its dangers. In winter, Baffin's Bay is quite frozen over, and when this ice breaks up, it is carried to the south of Greenland, for a distance of two hundred miles, where, from January to July it remains one unbroken band of ice, which quite prevents vessels coming to the ports of Greenland until later in the year. Yet this ice is gladly welcomed by the Greenlander, for it brings him great numbers of seals and bears, which are more needed by him than anything else. Moreover, the same current that brings the ice brings also a quantity of driftwood from the Siberian rivers, and this is much needed, for no country has so few trees as Greenland. The few to be found in rare spots are such miserable specimens that we may almost say it has none. These are the birch, elder, and willow, and they are scarcely any taller than you are.

Have you ever noticed the beautiful crystalline

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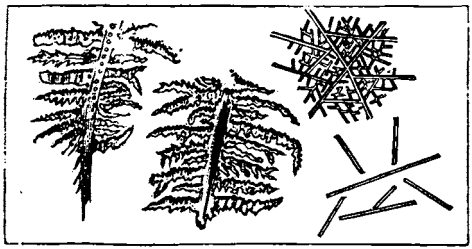
forms that snow takes? If not catch a flake some day upon anything black, and then you will have some idea; or, better still, look at one through a microscope, and you will find snow consists of the prettiest star shapes imaginable, and in great variety. The snow crystals of Greenland are especially large and beautiful, the largest being an inch long, and often resembling the



SNOW CRYSTALS.

end of a pointed feather. They always have six points, and glisten beautifully in the sunshine or moonlight.

It is colder in Greenland than in either Lapland or Iceland, and often when the door of a hut is opened, the cold air rushes in and turns the breath of the people into snow, which falls in flakes upon their clothes. The thermometer in Greenland is often fifty degrees *below* zero, while we in England think it cold

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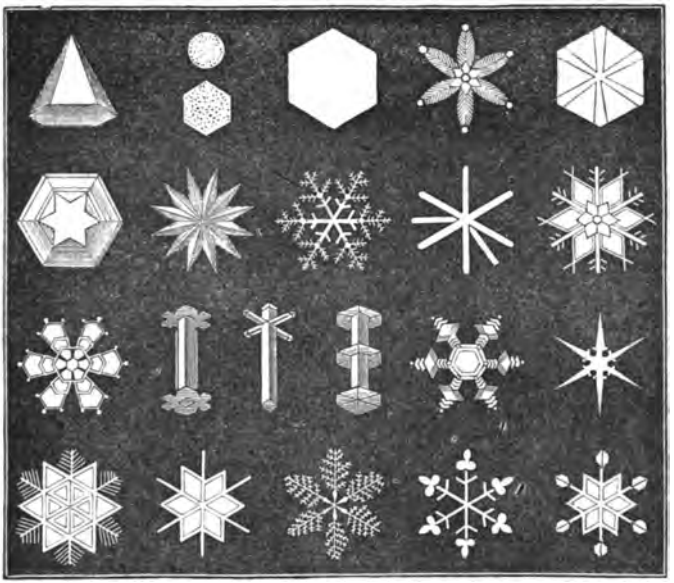

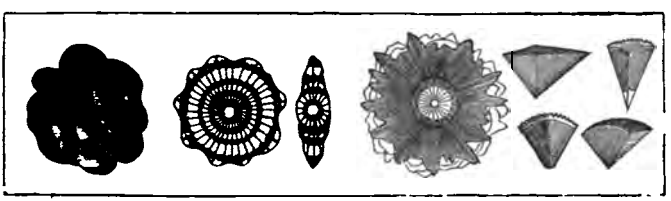

SNOW CRYSTALS.

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when it is fifty degrees *above*. No wonder then that during the night a person's clothes actually freeze hard and stiff, so that in the morning it is a difficult matter to put them on again; or that you are unable to carry a cup of tea to your mouth, unless you have warm mittens on; or that your face becomes terribly cracked and disfigured. But the most serious thing is, that people frequently become blind from the glare of the snow, remaining so for many days together. On this account they travel as much as possible by night instead of day as the glare is less dazzling then. In Greenland may sometimes be seen *red* snow. Only think of that! It is rather a dull red colour and is caused by tiny vegetable cells which contain a red colouring matter.

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CHAPTER II.

AS to the animals in Greenland, there are not many, the principal being the reindeer, bear, fox, dog, white hare, and ermine. As to birds, there are sea-gulls, eider-ducks, and ptarmigan, but few others. Whales, seals, and fish, abound. The walrus or morse is a very curious animal, often fifteen feet long, but having a very small head. His odd appearance is chiefly caused by two teeth or tusks, nearly two feet in length, which hang down from his mouth. They consist of very fine white ivory, which retains its good colour much longer than that of the elephant; so they are a prize to the Greenlander. But what use are they to the animal itself you ask? Of great use indeed, for they help him wonderfully to climb over the rocks and floes of ice, and in digging up the seaweeds on which he principally lives; though he is fond of shrimps and young seals in addition. The walrus is an amphibious animal, *i.e.*, able to live both on land and in water, and it is most difficult to catch, for the skin is so strong and slippery, that it is almost impossible to drive the

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harpoon through it, and the sharpest weapon often glides off without injury. Then, the walrus is generally found in herds of four or five at least, and if one is attacked the others rush to the rescue, and try to drive off the foe with their sharp tusks; sometimes sending these dangerous weapons completely through the bottom of a boat. This animal yields from twenty to thirty gallons of capital oil, besides which its flesh and skin are valuable; so we need not be surprised that the Greenlander is ready to hunt it whenever possible.

Still the principal enemy the walrus has, is the Polar or white bear, though the latter never dare engage in a straightforward face-to-face conflict with the former. As to this bear, it feeds upon seals and fish and is a dangerous enemy in the water as well as on the land, for it can dive with the greatest ease and swim after its prey. But usually the Polar bear is crafty enough to prefer taking a succession of dives, that he may not be seen so well, but come upon his enemy unawares.

How beautifully God fits every creature for the special life allotted to it! The Polar bear that is constantly running over fields of glassy ice has the soles

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of his feet thickly covered with long hair. So that he is in no danger of slipping. The cunning of the Polar bear is proved in another way, besides the numerous dives he takes in order to secure his prey. In order to surprise a seal, he will crouch down with his fore-paws doubled underneath, and pushing himself quietly and stealthily along by his hinder legs until only two or three yards from his unfortunate victim, he makes a sudden and successful spring upon it. Alas, for the poor seal then! In consequence of thus crouching so often upon the hard, sharp ice, the bear's fore-paws are often rubbed completely bare.

The Greenlanders, or Esquimaux as they are generally called, sometimes hide seal's flesh among loose stones above ground; but if Bruin happens to be taking his walks abroad in that direction, they must not expect to find it again for he is pretty certain to have enjoyed it for his dinner. One day a Greenlander who had spread some nets went to see if a seal were caught in them, and kneeling down upon the ice to get it clear, he suddenly had a slap on his back; still he did not look round, for he supposed it was merely a joke from his friend who had accompanied him, but then came a much heavier blow which seemed any-

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thing but friendly, this made the man turn sharply round. Can you imagine his dismay when he saw it was not his friend, but a savage old bear who was determined to dispute his supper with him? Bruin at

once seized the seal and began his meal, and the man hastened away, only too glad to get off in safety.

Polar bears are not in the habit of attacking men unless they are provoked. These animals hunt by

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CAPTURING A WHALE.

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scent, and live chiefly on the drifting ice. Sometimes they are carried by it as far as Iceland, where they find the flesh of the flocks and herds so very delicious after their endless seal food, that they kill many, and thus compel the inhabitants to muster in a strong force and drive such unwelcome and unscrupulous invaders away. Bear's flesh is said to be pretty good eating, but I fancy you and I would not like it so well as our beef and mutton.

The Greenland whale is valuable on account of the quantity of oil it furnishes as well as for whalebone, so that many vessels are fitted out every year on purpose to capture it. Great care and skill are necessary on the part of the sailors if they are to be successful. As soon as one of the crew sees a whale come to the surface to breathe, he calls out sharply, "There she blows," and immediately a boat that was kept quite ready is lowered. The harpooner also must be perfectly ready at the right moment to throw the harpoon, which is a kind of spear with a barbed head made of soft iron and attached to a cord four thousand feet long or more, kept coiled in a tub at the head of the boat. Of course the whale, the moment it is struck, tries to swim off to a great distance, sometimes

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dragging two or even three miles of rope away after it, and it moves so rapidly that it is necessary to throw water over the rope, for although this runs on a kind of pulley, it is dragged so sharply by the whale that the rubbing has sometimes set the boat on fire, or even cut it in two.

You must not, however, suppose that the harpoon has *killed* the creature; it has merely caught it, and as soon as the sailors are near enough, they throw at it a long sharp steel lance, which soon causes the whale to breathe its last. The crew of a whaling-ship had need be brave men, for they have many and terrible dangers to encounter. Sometimes the boat is dashed to pieces by a blow from the tail of the angry monster, or is cut off and hidden from the ship by a thick fog which prevents the sailors who man it seeing or hearing those in the ship. Sometimes the ice-fields strike together, and crush the strong vessel between them; or the men are stranded upon the ice, where for many hours they have to remain wet and frozen.

Of all the creatures found in Greenland, the Esquimaux could *least* spare the seal; for it is the most wholesome food he can have in that severe climate, and it gives him not only clothing, but also covering for

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his hut and his boat, while its oil enables him to have light and warmth in the long dark winter. Seals are scarce in deep water, or where the ice-fields are extensive, and where there are no seals there are no bears. Seals are very numerous in Greenland, and the people have the funniest way of catching them imaginable. They attract the seal by scraping the ice, thus making a noise like that produced by a seal in forming a hole with its flippers, and then putting the end of a pole into the water, they put their mouth to the other end and make various noises in imitation of the snorts and grunts of the unlucky seal, which, as soon as it shows itself, hoping to see a friendly neighbour seal, is dispatched by a wound in the head; for, if merely hit in the flesh, he generally disappears unhurt under the water. The Greenland seal is only about four feet long, yet it often weighs two hundred pounds or more.

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CHAPTER III.

THE dogs of Greenland do not bark, and therefore would make poor house-dogs, but they are exceedingly useful notwithstanding, for they are not only good hunters, but are used to draw the sledges. They are a wild sort of creature, and very voracious, as you will think when I tell you that in less than a minute one will devour two pounds of meat, or even more. They often have a terrible fight over a little food, and then, I am sorry to say, the weak get less than the strong. They are so ravenous that they eat the oddest things possible. For instance, a dog was much in the way one day, so a gentleman gave it a kick. But he also gave it something else which he had not intended; for his slipper flew off, and was at once devoured with great glee by the happy animal. They will even eat their own harness if they have a chance. A meal of salt meat kills an Esquimaux dog, but the feathers of birds are considered very good for them.

In the short summer these poor animals have no

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work to do, so their owners seem to think they need no food, and leave them to prowl among the rocks and pick up any old skins or scraps of dead fish they may happen to find. Sometimes they have a quarrel with the ravens for what the sea may chance to throw up.

I cannot help feeling rather sorry for these dogs, for the intense coldness of the ice gives them sore feet and makes them quite lame, so that sometimes the long-continued pain causes them to fall down in fits. They are very cunning, and often rather naughty too, I must confess. However anxious you may be to continue your journey with all speed, they will bite through their traces and hide away under the sledge, or jump over each others' backs in order to escape the whip. Thus all the traces become knotted and entangled, and the unfortunate traveller has to stand still in the freezing, biting air to make all straight once more, and will, probably, get his fingers frozen meanwhile. When you whip one of these dogs, it immediately bites its neighbour, and that one bites the next, so the result is a grand howling concert, and the driver is obliged to beat them with the whip-handle until they learn to be good and quiet.

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But I have not yet told you all their pranks. If the sledge remains fast in the deep snow, or from any other cause, these provoking animals, instead of making an effort to free it, actually lie quietly down and appear brim full of joy and triumph at the accident; and again the whip is brought into requisition to make them understand they are not their own masters. The dogs will also lie down if they think the sledge is too heavily loaded, and compel you to lighten the burden. Then, very often they refuse to be caught, so their owner is obliged to leave them behind. A poor fox that was desperately hungry has been known to play round the dogs, and the latter though in harness and drawing a sledge have soon managed to snap him up.

The ermine is not a native of Greenland although often found in that country. It is not much more than a foot long. In winter its fur turns quite white, with the exception of its tail. Partly from its fur so closely resembling the snow in colour, and partly from a sly trick it has of diving under the snow and not appearing again until several yards away, it is a difficult little creature to catch.

It is strange how many animals in northern

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countries change the colour of their plumage or skin in winter for a snowy white. The ptarmigan does this, although in summer it is the colour of tortoise-shell. The ptarmigan's nest, like that of the grouse, is a loosely-constructed heap of twigs and grass, and contains from ten to fourteen white eggs spotted with brown.

The hare in Greenland is also of a beautiful white colour, and from its fur the women sometimes make very nice soft gloves. People sometimes travel for three days in this icy country and only see one hare and a lemming, or perhaps, instead, one or two birds. In all that time these are the only signs of animal life. And if upon the sea, the only sound that falls occasionally upon your ear, breaking the solemn silence, is the cracking off of great pieces of ice from still larger masses.

But it is quite time to talk a little of the Esquimaux themselves. Of these there are not *more* than ten thousand, and some say only seven thousand. In addition there are about one thousand Danes, who trade in whalebone, etc., many of whom live at Disco, in the south-west of Greenland; rather a pleasant place for those who can put up with the cold,—with plenty of

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fishing and some good hunting. The Esquimaux are very short people as a rule—not more than five feet four inches in height—but strong and sturdy enough; with black hair and rather flat faces. Many have fine eyes and teeth. The women have very small hands, and the girls may often be seen with a fresh, rosy colour on their olive skins. The men, of course, have short hair, but the women long hair, which they fasten up in a kind of high knot on the top of the head, and adorn, whenever they can, with a bright ribbon; and this is almost the only difference between the ladies and gentlemen, for the former do not wear gowns as in most countries, but short coats, etc., like the men,

A YOUNG ESQUIMAUX.

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ESQUIMAUX SUMMER ENCAMPMENT.

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and from head to foot are clothed in reindeer or seal-skin. The Lapland fashion of wearing hay in the boots is common in Greenland also. The men, who are rather lazily inclined, manage to occupy themselves sometimes in hunting the reindeer, catching seals and fishing, and occasionally enjoying a bear hunt by night.

Their boats are the funniest kind you ever saw, and are made, not of wood, but of whalebone nicely covered with seal-skin. Not only the bottom and sides, but also the top, excepting just in the middle, where there is a round opening just large enough for a man to get in. Thus, you see, when once in his "kayak," he is kept snug and dry. It is such a light affair that he can easily carry it home on his arm.

There are some other boats more like ours which a traveller can hire if he wish, but *they* are always rowed by young women; the men would not do such hard work unless compelled. The mothers generally stay at home cooking fish or seal, and minding the children; but when they carry their babies out they always place them in a pocket on their back. The poor babies are kept quite naked while little; but people say they do not feel the cold very much, because

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this pocket is a part of the mother's warm fur coat, and fits closely round the child.

The Greenlanders are importunate beggars. I have heard of a woman taking her naked baby out of the large pocket and holding it in the cutting air until the kind-hearted gentleman from whom she was begging understood that, not content with having had several presents herself, she wanted one for her child also. He at once gave it a needle, which is a present the Esquimaux prize very highly, and the poor little child was stowed away again in its warm nest. They are quite willing to sell a silver spoon for two or three needles, and indeed for the payment of one needle will build you a snow hut. True, these huts take only two or three hours to build. Curious bargains have sometimes been made in Greenland. For instance, some years ago an Englishman visiting the country had a fiddle which was exceedingly admired and coveted by a Greenlander, who offered a large quantity of whalebone in exchange for it. The offer was accepted, and the Englishman who had the whalebone soon sold it again for one hundred pounds. Saws are considered extremely valuable in Greenland, the reason being their great use in cutting up the long bones of whales for

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their sledges, and the bone or ivory used for protecting the exposed parts of their kayaks from the ice. Knives, also, they are delighted to get.

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CHAPTER IV.

HUMAN nature is just the same in Greenland as in England and every other country, as the following brief tale will show. Some travellers to this icy country were very anxious to learn from the natives the extent and character of the coast, and seeing an intelligent woman named Iligluik, they persuaded her to draw a map for them. A sheet of paper with the outline of the map just begun was handed her, and she soon completed it nicely. She appeared very modest and grateful for all the pleasant words and kind attentions of the English travellers. She was extremely fond of singing, and had a soft voice and an excellent ear, and so charmed was she by it that when once she had begun there was no stopping her. She was so much cleverer than other women in Greenland that the travellers called her "the wise woman," and welcomed her on board whenever she liked to go; but I am sorry to say all the praise and attention lavished upon her made her become rather conceited and much less agreeable than before. She sat like a

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queen expecting great respect and courtesy, grew too proud to say "Thank you!" for a present, and absolutely refused to help in building a snow hut, though at first she had done this with eager delight. Thus you see we often become spoilt, vain and unamiable by having too much praise and good fortune.

Generally speaking, the Esquimaux are very good-tempered and cheerful, even when left for days without proper food and fuel, and this is often the case, but unfortunately when they *have* plenty they eat too much, and seldom trouble to save it for a day of need. The Greenlanders do not like naming death, or admitting that a neighbour is no longer in this world, and so, if you happen to ask about some person, not knowing that he is dead, the people point to a child or relative of the deceased or in some other way avoid giving you a direct answer. But, I am glad to say, *many* of these poor Esquimaux have become able to speak of death calmly and even joyfully, and I will tell you why. Some years ago a Dane, who loved God very much, named Hans Egede, went to live in Greenland on purpose to teach the few inhabitants of that desolate country about God and Heaven, for he knew they had no religion at all. They were without God

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and therefore without hope in the world. Could he help feeling sorry for them? Of course, Hans Egede had many troubles; he was often very short of food, as he did not know how to catch seals, and depended upon vessels visiting Greenland for his provisions. He lived in a rough stone hut built by himself, and had few comforts indeed; but his heaviest trouble was that for twelve years he lived thus, often talking earnestly to the people and praying for them, and yet no one would become a Christian.

Afterwards more Missionaries came, some Moravians named Matthew and Christian Stack from Hernhutt in Germany, John Beck and others. The small-pox visited Greenland and hundreds of people died, but still all hearts remained hard. At last, one day as John Beck was sitting in his poor home translating the Gospel into the Greenland tongue, a few people from a distance came to see him, and he began to read to them about Christ's sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane. They listened with interest, and soon Karjanak one of their number said, "Tell me that once more; for I too desire to be saved." Tears of sorrow and gratitude ran down his cheeks while he thus heard of the great love of God the Father, and God

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ESQUIMAUX WINTER ENCAMPMENT.

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the Son, and he became a true disciple. His family followed his example, so there was now one truly happy household in Greenland. Karjanak, however, soon became weak and ill, and God sent His angels to carry his happy spirit to the realms of glory. Karjanak's friends stood weeping around him, but he said, "Grieve not, I am going to my Saviour." After his death the hearts of the Missionaries were rejoiced by seeing many Greenlanders become God's people. So you see though God does not always answer the prayers of His servants *directly*, He *does* answer them sometime.

And now how many things are changed in Greenland! Formerly, when a mother died, her poor little baby, although quite well, was buried with her, because no one would have the trouble of bringing it up. Many years ago the Greenlanders talked of a person called Torgarsak, who they said lived under the sea, feasting upon seal's flesh, and received the spirits of all good seal-catchers. *Now* they talk of the blessed Saviour, seated on His throne of glory above the starry sky, in a Heaven more glorious than mortal tongue can describe, Who is waiting to welcome His people to the mansions He has prepared for them. Once they

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spent days together in noisy howlings and wild dances, now they like, instead, to meet often in God's House, to sing hymns of praise and hear His word explained. Once they thought it no sin to seize as their own anything they happened to take a fancy to on board a vessel. Now most of them remember the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal."

The Greenlanders take great pains to learn and remember names; and are, indeed, rather intelligent people. I have not yet told you of their houses, they are very simple ones, so it will not require long to do so. They contrive to have two or three huts under a roof, so that one entrance serves for all. This, as well as the passages, is very low, only just high enough to allow one to go in without crawling on hands and knees. A slab of ice fixed in the roof lets in just sufficient light. In one corner is a snow bench which serves as the kitchen table. And on this is a shallow open vessel containing seal-oil, which feeds a wick made of dry moss. This rough and homely contrivance has to serve the poor Greenlander as both lamp and fire, for over it hangs the pot containing the fish or seal for dinner. Half the extent of the hut is taken up by a snow bank or bench about two feet

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high, which is covered with reindeer-skins and forms the bed for the whole family. Is it not strange to think of sleeping every night upon a bed of ice? Some of the huts are round, others square, and in some you have really to creep along the passages they are so low. There is sometimes no door, as, if there were, there would be no ventilation. If you were a Greenland child you would not only be often frost-bitten, and wretchedly cold, but you would have to do without many of the nice things you now enjoy, and be content to live upon wild reindeer, bear, seal, fish, hare, or fox. Your only vegetables would be lettuce, turnips, or carrots; and your only fruit crowberries, bilberries, and cranberries, preserved in oil. You would not much like such fare as that. No bread, butter, milk, apples! not half the nice things you now enjoy. Well, my dear children, my time has quite taken wing for the present, so we must bid a hasty adieu to Greenland. Let us prize the many and great comforts we have, and think with warm interest and sympathy of those who have fewer advantages.

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